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Spy curb on Soviet bloc asked

By Bill Gertz
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Sen. William V. Roth, Jr., Delaware Republican, introduced legislation yesterday designed to curb Soviet bloc spying by restricting U.S. travel by foreign nationals from Soviet client states.

"We have experienced an invasion of American soil by operatives of the Soviet Union who cloak their work in the banners of Eastern Europe and Cuba," Mr. Roth told the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations which he chairs. "Agents of such nations have for too long been mistakenly treated as less of a threat than the Kremlin puppeteers who control their actions."

The Roth legislation drew prompt criticism from a State Department spokesperson.

Mr. Roth's bill would require "businessmen and corporations" from Warsaw Pact nations and Cuba to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

Currently, commercial officials from those countries are exempt from registering with the Department of Justice.

In a recent series of hearings that included testimony from FBI Director William Webster, Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Perle and other intelligence experts, the sub-

committee found that Soviet bloc intelligence officials have used "commercial fronts" to collect intelligence secrets.

The proposed legislation would also apply a 25-mile travel restriction currently in force against Soviet consular and United Nations personnel to diplomats from Poland, East Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Cuba.

"It makes little sense that we restrict the Soviets in their travel privileges yet allow others who work at their direction free access to our country," the Delaware senator said.

U.S. officials in the past have opposed new measures restricting travel by Soviet satellite personnel since it would invite retribution against U.S. diplomats in Eastern Europe who can travel freely and collect intelligence in closed societies.

That theme was echoed yesterday in subcommittee testimony from Rozanne Ridgway, assistant secretary of state for European affairs.

Without permission to travel freely in communist countries, U.S. diplomats would be unable to maintain contact with dissidents, religious leaders, collect vital political and economic data, monitor military movements and weapons installations and provide consular services for American businessmen and citizens, she stated.

Mrs. Ridgway listed the recent counterintelligence measures against hostile intelligence services that the Reagan administration has undertaken, including a ban on setting up satellite antennas at a new embassy site in Northwest Washington and at a "recreational facility" on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.